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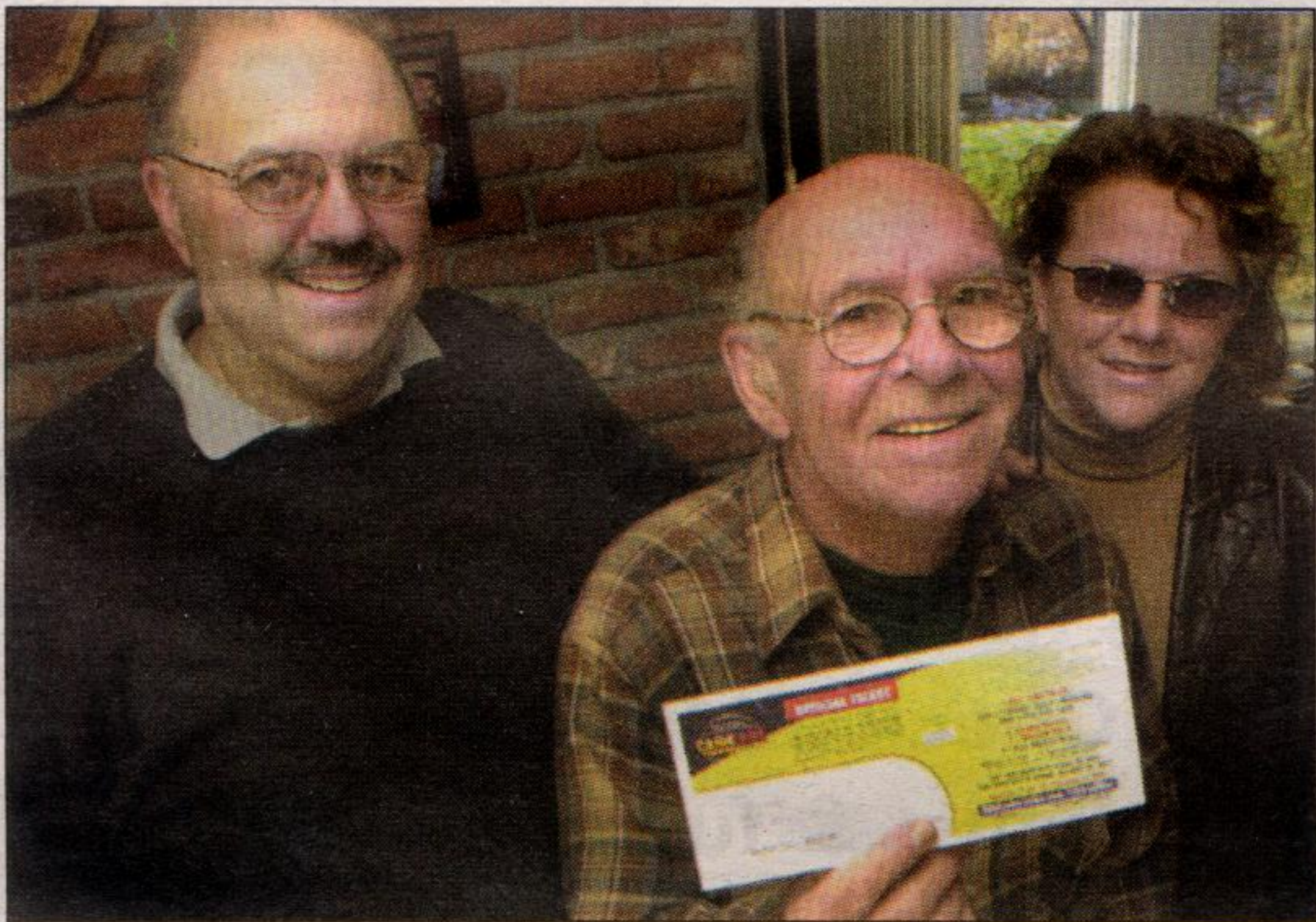
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Neil Charette holds his million dollar-winning Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation lottery ticket while son Rob and daughter Gisele look on Wednesday. Photo by Herb Garbutt

Acton man feels like a million

Wins grand prize in Princess Margaret lottery

Neil Charette was a popular guy Wednesday morning.

"I noticed the kids all being really nice to me," Charette, 76, said with the smile of a man who had just won a million dollars.

There was a good reason for that smile. The 50-year Acton resident did win a million dollars after having his name drawn for one of the four top prizes in the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation lottery.

The draw was held live on CITY-TV and it didn't take long before Charette's son Rob started getting calls at work.

"Some friends and customers called to tell me

and I knew there was only one Neil Charette in Acton so I called dad and told him to sit down. I won't repeat what he said when I told him but I said, 'No dad, I'm serious.'"

Half an hour later, Charette got the official word when the hospital foundation called to confirm his winning ticket number.

Charette has been buying tickets since the lottery began.

"It's hard to believe but win or lose, it's for a good cause," he said.

Charette had yet to make any plans for the money except for sharing it with his family, including sons Rob and Raymond and daughter Gisele.

"My family is my life," he said.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

Hill to live Olympic dream

Georgetown pitcher helps Canada qualify for Athens Games

With the Expos' future in Montreal in doubt, Shawn Hill's opportunity to pitch in Canada may be running out. But at least if it doesn't happen next year, Hill will be pitching for Canada.

The 22-year-old right-hander returned home last week after helping Canada

qualify for the 2004 Olympics in Athens by placing second at a qualifying tournament in Panama.

"It's really a no-lose situation," Hill said. "My goal the whole time has been to make the big leagues but the Olympics is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Major League players are not eligible for the Olympics so Hill, who finished off last season by going 3-1 in AA Harrisburg, wouldn't mind putting off his Major League debut. The ideal scenario would see Hill start the season in AAA, go to the Olympics and then get a September call-up to the Expos.

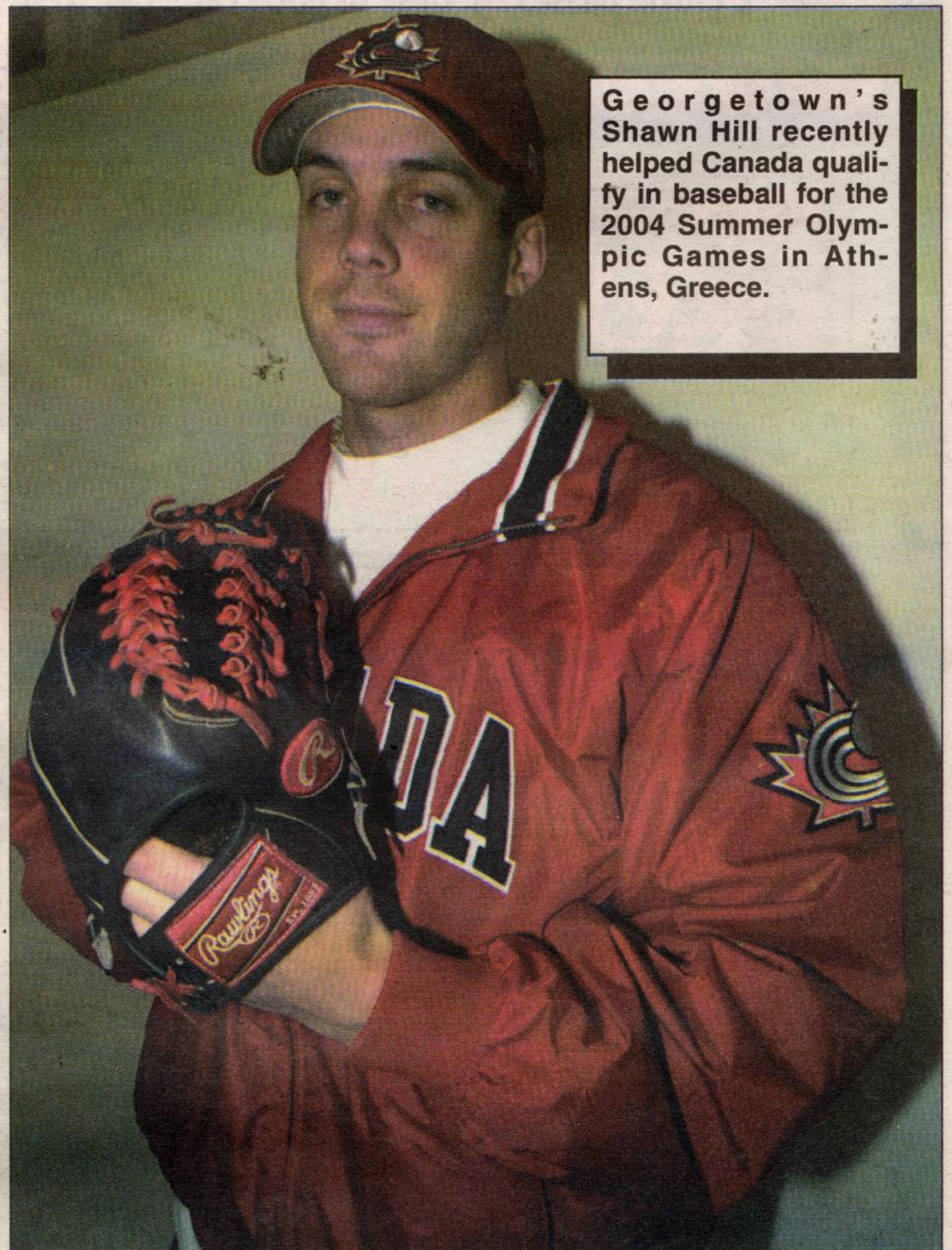
And Hill is obviously in the Expos' plans. They added him to their 40-man roster while he was in Panama.

Though Canada had already clinched an Olympic berth, Hill got the call to start the qualifying tournament final against Cuba. The Cubans had trounced Canada 7-2 in the round robin but Hill pitched six shutout innings before giving up a two-out, two-run homer in the seventh.

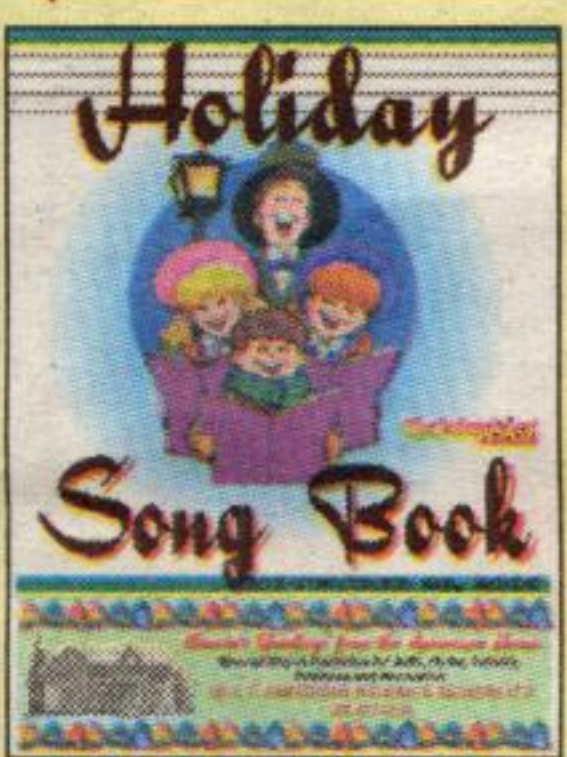
"I felt that I threw well, I just made one bad pitch," he said. "It only cleared the fence by about five feet and it was a hitter's park. In most places it would have been a routine fly ball."

Cuba went on to win the game and the tournament with a 5-0 victory, scoring three more runs off a reliever in the eighth.

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Georgetown's Shawn Hill recently helped Canada qualify in baseball for the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.



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